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ABSTRACT

This document describes the perceptions of participants in the New Brunswick Beginning Teachers' Induction Program (BTIP) for the 1998-99 school year. For the fourth consecutive year, the New Brunswick Department of Education has organized the BTIP in all 12 anglophone districts. The BTIP includes mentor training workshops, district level activities, and local school level activities. Data for this report were collected from beginning teachers, mentors, school principals, and district coordinators in each of the districts. Near the end of the school year, participants completed questionnaires examining their feelings about the BTIP and whether they believed it should continue. Results found overall strong support for the BTIP from all groups. The two problems most frequently reported by teachers and mentors were lack of time to participate in activities and being mismatched with mentors. Mentors believed the BTIP was useful both to mentees and to themselves. Levels of principal involvement varied considerably, and over half of the principals were either not, or only minimally, involved. District coordinators perceived strong support for the BTIP from the Department of Education and district officials. Problems they reported included late additions to the program, not being able to include long-term supply teachers in the program, poor mentoring matches, and difficulty tracking funds. Recommendations for the future of BTIP are included. (Contains 10 references.) (SM)

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Supporting New Teachers: A Report on the 1998-99 Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick

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September 1999

New Nouveau Brunswick

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the fourth consecutive year, the Department of Education, in cooperation with the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, and the University of New Brunswick, organized the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) in all 12 anglophone school districts of the province. Two hundred fifty-three beginning teachers in 130 schools were paired with an equal number of experienced teachers who acted as their mentors for the school year. The number of beginning teachers represents a 17 % increase from the previous year, and a 62 % increase since the Program began in 1995. The database for this report consists of survey responses from four groups of participants (% returns in brackets): beginning teachers (75.5%), mentors (68.4%), principals (78.5), district coordinators (100%).

Approximately 50% of the 'beginning teachers' in the program were recent university graduates without teaching experience. The remainder had previous experience, ranging from supply teaching to many years of full-time teaching in other jurisdictions. All were new appointments in their districts.

Because of the large number of participants, the Provincial Steering Committee asked district coordinators to organize local mentor training workshops instead of sending mentors to a single, provincial workshop, as had been done previously. The district coordinators employed a variety of models: one district held workshops in three locations and allowed teachers to attend the most convenient one; several coordinators collaborated to develop sessions for teachers from two adjoining districts. Seven district coordinators invited both their mentors and beginning teachers to a single workshop, while the remainder organized training and orientation workshops for each group on separate days. Participants gave high ratings to these workshops and many commented that they provided a useful introduction to the Program. Mentor attendance exceeded 90 %, the highest yet recorded. Organizers felt that the decentralized format was a successful substitute to the centralized model. Following the initial training sessions, eleven of the twelve districts organized at least two additional group meetings or workshops. Virtually every beginning teacher and mentor rated these district-organized sessions as either "very useful" or "satisfactory".

The Beginning Teacher Survey collected data on the frequency of participation in seven low-risk and five higher-risk professional activities which were encouraged at the local school level. Compared to 1998, statistically-significant improvements were noted in three low-risk activities (sharing resources, lesson planning, discussing assessment) and in one higher-risk activity (observing mentor teach). Participation rates in the low-risk activities generally exceeded 95 % and ranged from 75 to 90 % for more challenging activities. Overall, participation rates for low-risk activities improved over the previous year and compared favourably with earlier programs. Participation rates in higher-risk activities also reflected a general overall improvement. In order of descending priority, beginning teachers indicated they wanted more opportunities to observe colleagues teach, observe mentors teach, be observed teaching by mentor, and receive feedback about their teaching.

All four participant groups offered positive comments regarding the value of the BTIP; recommendations for program continuation ranged from 98 to 100 %. Approximately 96 % of the beginning teachers felt that they had benefitted from the program. This figure, while a significant improvement from the figure of 82 % recorded in 1998, marked a return to the levels experienced in earlier years of the BTIP. Of the seven beginning teachers who felt the program had not benefitted them, six were teachers with previous teaching experience.

Lack of time to participate in activities and being mis-matched with a mentor who had a different grade or teaching assignment, were the two problems most frequently reported by both beginning teachers and their mentors. The Steering Committee appears to have successfully addressed previous problems with unclear program expectations and, to a lesser extent, with confusion over funding and accounting procedures. Some fine-tuning is still required in the latter area.

Mentors enthusiastically endorsed the BTIP - 97 % felt their partners had benefitted, while 98 % of the mentors believed that the program had been of personal benefit to them. Mentors identified many positive aspects of the Program. Their remarks suggested six overlapping themes with predominantly affective overtones: helping others, self improvement, collegiality, gifts from beginning teachers, feeling valued, and friendship.

The level of principals' involvement varied considerably. Over half of principals were either not involved or minimally involved. Principals re-asserted their need to be better informed about the program and to have opportunities to discuss issues such as the effects of BTIP teaching release time on schools, evaluation of beginning teachers, the growing impact of supply teacher shortages, and the extent to which they should become involved in the Program.

District coordinators perceived strong support for the BTIP from the Department of Education and district officials. Although they felt there had been an improvement, coordinators would like stronger support from the NBTA and from school principals. Among the persistent problems reported by the coordinators were late additions to the program, not being able to include long-term supply teachers in the program, poor matches between mentors and partners, and difficulty tracking funds. All twelve district coordinators recommended program continuation.

The surveys identified six issues which the Steering Committee needs to address:

1) Who should qualify as a beginning teacher?
2) Can the BTIP be adapted to better meet the needs of itinerant teachers and specialists?
3) How can we better inform and involve principals in the BTIP?
4) How can we assist the coordinators in providing clearer information on funding?
5) In areas where there are supply teacher shortages, can we adapt the program in order to provide participants with reasonable amounts of teaching release time?
6) Is increased structure in the BTIP appropriate and/or desirable?

Recommendations

1. The BTIP Steering Committee should re-examine its criteria for beginning teachers and develop guidelines which recognize that the needs of long-term supply teachers with limited experience are significantly different from teachers who are new to a district but have more than two years of full-time service.

2. The Chair of the Steering Committee should advise the Deputy-minister of Education that several principals have requested an induction program for new principals developed along BTIP principles.

3. Continuing opportunities are needed for district coordinators to share "best practices" and discuss solutions to a variety of issues and problems. Two issues requiring immediate attention are accounting for BTIP funds at the district level and the implications of the supply teacher shortage on the Program.

4. District coordinators need to continue to address principals' needs to be better informed about the BTIP and to have opportunities to develop a consensus on such issues as release time and the evaluation of beginning teachers.

5. In districts with large numbers of participants, the Steering Committee should recommend to Directors of Education that they explore the option of seconding outstanding mentors to assist district coordinators with the Program.

6. Despite noted improvements, the Steering Committee and district coordinators should continue their efforts to make the use of BTIP funds at the district level as transparent and user-friendly as possible. An underlying aim should be to insure that partners have equal access to funds for teaching release time.

7. District coordinators should consider holding initial training sessions for new and returning mentors either in the Spring or before school starts in September.

8. District coordinators should encourage mentors to make initial contacts with beginning teachers prior to the start of the school year and before the Fall Orientation Workshop.

9. The Steering Committee should encourage district coordinators to try new induction models designed for specialist and/or itinerant teachers.

Supporting New Teachers: A Report on the 1998-99 Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick

The purpose of this document is to report on the perceptions of participants in the Beginning Teachers' Induction Program (BTIP) for the 1998-99 school year, to compare their responses to that of previous years, to evaluate the program, and to make recommendations for future directions.

For the fourth consecutive year the New Brunswick Department of Education has organized an induction program for beginning teachers in all 12 anglophone districts of the province. Previous reports (Scott, Smith, & Grobe, 1995; Scott & Compton, 1996; Scott, 1997; and Scott 1998) provide details of these undertakings. These reports are available from either the Department of Education, Fredericton, NB, or the ERIC Database (Resources in Education).

Introduction to the Study

The Database

Data for this report were collected from participating beginning teachers, mentors, school principals and district coordinators in each of the 12 school districts in the province. Near the end of the school year each of these groups was asked to respond to a separate questionnaire distributed by the district coordinators. Most of the mentors' and beginning teachers completed their evaluations during their final group activity. The coordinators were asked to collect the questionnaires and make summaries for district use before forwarding the original survey forms to the author.

Table 1, which follows, shows the number of beginning teachers, mentors, principals and district coordinators who were involved in the 1998-99 BTIP. It also indicates the number of survey returns in each category and the overall percentage returns on a provincial basis.

Table 1

Numbers, categories, and percentage returns of participants in the BTIP Survey

	Categories of participants			
	beginning teachers	**mentors**	**principals**	**coordinators**
# participants	253	253	130	12
# survey returns	191	173	102	12
% returns	75.5%	68.4%	78.5%	100%

The figures in Table 2, which follows, reflect the growth pattern in the number of participants since the BTIP became a provincial initiative in all twelve anglophone school districts in 1995. This table permits a comparison of the figures over the past four years.

Table 2

A four-year comparison of BTIP participant numbers

Participants	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Beginning Teachers	156	125	210	253
Mentors	147	125	210	253
Principals/Schools	96	78	108	130
Coordinators	12	12	12	12

Normally one would expect to find equal numbers of mentors and beginning teachers. The discrepancy in the first year was created in District 2 (Moncton) when many beginning teachers who were listed as participants were never assigned mentors. That situation has been corrected, although there have been a few other cases in various districts in which one mentor worked with two beginning teachers because no one else was available. The figures do not reflect these cases because each beginning teacher was assigned a mentor. This year, despite the figures above, one beginning teacher in District 16 who participated in the BTIP program, claimed to have never worked with a mentor.

Although we use the term beginning teacher to refer to new teachers paired with experienced mentors, some clarification is necessary. Ninety-six of the 191 beginning teachers (50.3%) who responded to the survey were recent university graduates without any previous experience. The remainder had taught previously as supply teachers or as full-time teachers in another province or state. This figure is higher than the previous year when the figure was 42%. Within districts the percentages of new teachers ranged from a low of 31% in District 16 (Miramichi) to a high of 100% in District 15 (Bathurst). An examination of the data on 'beginning teachers' with previous teaching experience, reveals that 61% had been supply teachers, while the remainder (36 individuals) had full-time experience in another province or district. Among the latter group one teacher reported that she had previously taught for 13 years in Ontario; another had taught for 5 years at a Band School in this province, plus had various maternity leaves which added up to a total of over 7 years experience. Still another had taught for 8 years in public schools in another district. Two other 'beginning teachers' indicated that they had taught for 7 and 4 years respectively in the United States.

The number of partnerships per district ranged from a low of seven in both School Districts 6 and 15 (Rothesay and Bathurst areas) to a high of 39 in the Saint John area (District 8). The average number of pairs per district was 21, up from 17.5 the previous year. Table 3 shows the distribution of the induction partnerships among the school districts during the past four years.

Table 3

Distribution of induction pairs among the anglophone school districts during the four years of the provincial BTIP

school district	number of induction pairs per school year			
	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99
2	40	36	41	22
4	14	5	15	14
6	1	4	21	7
8	20	18	30	39
10	5	5	21	11
12	7	5	16	28*
13	5	9	10	23
14	3	10	11	10
15	7	2	2	7
16	4	5	18	22
17	15	12	11	24
18	35	14	14	33

The asterisk beside the 28 partnerships in District 12 indicates that this district chose to include both 13 long-term supply teachers and 15 beginning teachers in their program. Since the long-term supply teachers were not funded by the Provincial formula, the District was required to supplement its local BTIP budget.

Structure and Funding

The Steering Committee of the BTIP is chaired by Tom Hanley, the Assistant-director of Professional Development and Innovations with the Department of Education. In addition to one representative from the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) and one from the University of New Brunswick, each of the 12 anglophone districts sends one representative, usually a district supervisor. The latter coordinates the program in his or her own district.

Funding is provided by both the Department of Education and the NBTA which represents only anglophone teachers in the province. The Department transfers to each district $500 for every pair of participants, based on full-time equivalent (FTE) beginning teachers. District Coordinators are responsible for allocating this money to the pairs of beginning teachers and mentors. In a memorandum to district coordinators, dated October 30, 1996, Mr. Hanley reminded coordinators of the intended uses for these funds: a) providing release time for new teachers and their mentors to visit each others' classrooms; b) providing release time for new teachers and their mentors to meet to discuss materials, to review videos, and to dialogue about

teaching; c) purchasing materials that focus on the teaching process and support the professional growth of beginning teachers. The Department of Education allocations to each district are made available at the beginning of each school year but they must be spent by the end of the budgetary year which ends on March 31.

In addition, the NBTA makes monies available to each pair of teachers (based on Full Time Equivalent beginning teachers), but they must apply directly to the NBTA professional development officer in order to receive it. Since the total funding available from the NBTA is a fixed amount, the actual allocation to each pair varies from year to year, depending on the number of pairs. Grants have ranged from a high of $300 in 1996-97, to $225 in 1997-98, and $165 in 1998-99. NBTA funds are not available until well after the BTIP is in operation. Applications must be completed by existing pairs and processed by NBTA staff before cheques are issued. This funding, however, may be used until the end of the regular school year in June. Previous reports have made it clear that teachers and coordinators, to a lesser extent, have had considerable difficulty separating the two funds and planning for their different deadlines.

Professional Activities Supporting the BTIP

Mentor Training Workshops. For the first three years of the BTIP, it was the practice of the Provincial Steering Committee to invite all experienced teachers who had agreed to act as mentors to a two-day Mentor Training Workshop held in Fredericton in mid-September. Following the 1997 workshop in which the number of participants exceeded 200, the Committee decided that mentor training should move to the district or superintendency level for the 1998-99 Program. Nevertheless, the purpose remained the same: to inform mentors about the expectations of the BTIP, to provide an opportunity to hear from successful beginning teacher-mentor pairs from the previous year, and to learn skills which will facilitate their role as mentor.

This year all twelve district coordinators reported that they held initial mentor training sessions; several collaborated (eg. Districts 2 and 4, 6 and 8, 17 and 18) with colleagues in the same superintendency to hold combined workshops. Provincially, 84% of the mentors attended - an improvement of 10% from the previous year when it was done centrally. Two districts achieved attendance rates in excess of 90%; no district was below 70%. This is a significant improvement over last year when mentor attendance from three districts was less than fifty percent.

In their survey returns, nine district coordinators indicated that, after their mentor training workshops were completed, they were involved in the selection of 24 additional mentors. (Only Districts 2, 4, and 10 did not add to their mentor list.) Since this accounts for most of the mentors who did not attend, it suggests that virtually every mentor who was identified at the time, attended the local workshops. Eleven of the twelve district coordinators felt that it had been possible to recruit sufficient competent mentors; the other was uncertain. Approximately one in five mentors had served in this capacity before; five had served twice, three served three years, and one was a mentor for the fourth time.

Eleven of the twelve coordinators felt that the district-organized workshop had been a successful substitute for the centrally organized provincial workshop; the District 8 organizer remained uncertain. Several coordinators mentioned advantages in organizing mentor training locally: less expense involved, being able to tailor the workshop to local needs, and dealing with smaller numbers. In District 12, three workshops were held at various locations. This reduced the stress on schools because fewer supply teachers were needed at any one time and participants could choose the place and time which best suited them. In Districts 17 and18, where mentors combined for a full day session, one of the two organizing coordinators commented, "I felt I was able to establish faces/names quicker... I think [the mentors] were better able to focus on their roles without distraction. We made the day relaxed, yet highly informative. That is hard to do with 100 plus." A mentor who attended this workshop agreed and supported the complete separation of mentors from mentees: "It was good to gather the mentors without the mentees to start. [It] helped define the role of the mentor."

In seven districts, coordinators elected to combine mentors with beginning teachers for their initial training workshop; five districts held workshops for mentors only, although in some cases school and/or district administrators were included. Both formats invariably included a mentor-beginning teacher pair from the previous year, as well as a focus on the expectations and responsibilities of mentors. Participants also received a copy of a binder, entitled A Guide to the New Brunswick Beginning Teacher Induction Program: A Partnership that Builds Success (Ho Fatt, 1998). Besides containing suggestions and guidelines for all participants, it specifies five general goals of the Program: orientation, support, acquisition and refinement of teaching skills, development of a philosophy of education, and self-assessment and self-evaluation. In addition to the Guide, many districts reported introducing the book Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching, by Charlotte Danielson (1996), as a resource which mentors could use to examine the elements of teaching with their partners.

The vast majority (86%) of mentors who commented on the initial training workshops organized at the district levels were positive about their experiences. Mentors in District 2 remarked: "It prepared me for the mentor role" and "[The workshop] gave me an idea of direction, purpose". A mentor from District 4 identified some of the resources which facilitated the process for her:

> I really enjoyed the BTIP Workshop for mentors in the fall. The book [Enhancing Professional Practice] is a valuable tool to serve as a guide also. This session set the tone for the year and allowed us to meet and discuss with other mentors and beginning teachers.

Another common theme was how valuable it was to hear from mentor-beginning teacher partners from the previous year. While most mentors acknowledged that the workshops clarified program expectations in a user-friendly manner, some of the relatively few negative criticisms focussed on the timing of the workshops. This mentor from District 10 was typical of several in

her district: "Useful information - wrong time of year. This must be done before school begins." On the other hand, several mentors in various districts lamented that their mentee had not been hired at the time of the workshop. This dilemma will not go away, but the situation seems to be improving.

District Level Activities. The data indicate that, following the Mentor Training Workshops, all but one of the district coordinators organized two or more additional meetings for both beginning teachers and mentors. The exception occurred in District 6 where, after the initial training session, the coordinator met informally with individuals. Otherwise, mentors and beginning teachers organized their own activities. In the remaining districts, in addition to mentoring skill development and initial orientation, the organizers provided mid-point evaluations and inservice sessions, as well as time for partners to plan their activities, exchange information, and socialize. Furthermore, near the end of the school year, closing activities for BTIP participants were organized in the majority of the twelve districts. Both mentors and beginning teachers rated these workshops and meetings as either "very useful" or "satisfactory". Of the multitude of activities rated by over 300 mentors and beginning teachers, only two workshops were rated "useless" by two individuals - a remarkable record of success! The level of professional activity organized by the coordinators remained consistent and reasonably comprehensive, as had been the case in 1997-98.

Local School Level Activities. In their questionnaires, both mentors and beginning teachers were asked to list and rate the usefulness of all the activities intended to accomplish the goals of the BTIP. Their responses generally include activities organized both at the district level by the coordinators and at the school level by the partners. In addition, beginning teachers were asked to indicate the approximate frequency with which they participated in specific activities associated with induction programs. This list of typical induction activities was developed from earlier BTIP studies in New Brunswick and from a review of the literature on teacher induction and mentoring programs. The frequency pattern provides a comprehensive picture of the scope and concentration of professional activities pursued by the mentor-beginning teacher partners. Finally, beginning teachers were asked to indicate if the list contained activities which they would like to have participated in more frequently.

An examination of data from the beginning teachers' responses to questions about activities organized at the school level is the focus of this section. Analyses of similar data in 1997 led to a decision to divide the activities into two categories. Category one consists of seven activities which represent reduced emotional risk to teachers, both from a personal and professional perspective. This is because these activities do not require any special training; teachers generally feel comfortable participating in these activities. All these activities require informal contacts and involve discussions of day-to-day educational concerns.

Table 4 lists the activities and compares the 1998-99 rates of participation to the three previous years. For analyses of statistical significance, 1999 figures were compared only to 1998. The number of respondents used for the calculation was 191 less the number who did not reply to an individual question. This varied between 2 and 8.

Table 4

A percentage comparison of beginning teachers' participation rates for specific low-risk professional activities during the 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 Induction Programs

		Frequency				
Professional Activities		**0**	**1-5**	**6-10**	**>10**	***p < 0.05 ****p < 0.01**
1. Make informal contacts with mentor at school	**1999**	0.5	6.8	10	81.7	
	1998	1.2	10.5	8.1	80.2	
	1997	1.6	3.2	4.8	90.6	
	1996	4.6	12.3	12.3	70.4	
2. Discuss teaching ideas or strategies	**1999**	2.5	14.7	30.4	53.4	
	1998	2.3	20.3	23.8	53.5	
	1997	0	11.7	20	68.3	
	1996	3.1	27.5	23	45.9	
3. Share or research teaching materials, books, etc	**1999**	4.2	24.1	28.3	41.4	
	1998	10.5	32.5	19.8	37.2	*
	1997	1.6	20.6	33.3	44.4	
	1996	10.7	33.7	16.8	38.2	
4. Discuss curriculum or lesson planning	**1999**	2.6	23.6	31.4	40.8	
	1998	7.6	33.3	22.8	36.2	*
	1997	3.2	19.4	22.6	54.8	
	1996	10.7	33.7	19.9	35.2	
5. Discuss student assessment or reporting	**1999**	2.1	29.8	30.9	35.6	
	1998	10.5	37.2	22.7	29.6	**
	1997	1.6	27.4	25.8	45.2	
	1996	12.7	30.2	23.8	33.3	
6. Discuss classroom management techniques	**1999**	6.8	30.4	33.0	27.2	
	1998	7.6	31	28.7	32.7	
	1997	0	20.6	27	52.4	
	1996	6.3	36.5	27	30.2	
7. Discuss administrative policies or procedures	**1999**	5.8	37.2	25.7	28.8	
	1998	9.3	39.5	26.2	25.0	
	1997	1.6	30.6	22.6	45.2	
	1996	6.2	40.6	21.9	23.4	

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Since these are relatively low-risk activities, one would expect high rates of participation and hence very low rates of non-involvement. When this is the case, the percentages appearing in the first frequency column, will approach zero. The most recent figures indicate that with the exception of item two, lower frequency rates were recorded in 1999 than in 1998. This indicates that there were fewer examples of partners who did not participate in such basic activities as sharing resources and discussing such topics as classroom assessment, classroom management, and administrative policies. Although the percentages of non-participation generally are not as low as those recorded in 1997, the pattern is fairly consistent with expected behaviour patterns and reflects an overall improvement. In other words, given the goal of having every mentor-beginning teacher pair participating in the listed activities, there were statistically significant improvements in items 3, 4, and 5 from 1998 and a continuing trend towards higher participation at varying levels of frequency. Although some of the figures are still not as positive as the outstanding results in 1997, Table 4 implies that the regressive trend of 1998 has been reversed, at least for low-risk activities between the beginning teacher and the mentor.

The activities listed in Table 5 place higher emotional and professional demands on the participants and may be termed higher-risk activities. Generally, they involve observing either a colleague or a mentor teach or being observed by one's mentor and subsequently receiving feedback (conferencing). Consequently, higher percentages of non-participation (the zero column) and lower percentages in the last column (participation greater than 10) can be expected than was the case in Table 4. The comments of a beginning teacher in District 18 may have captured the hesitation which some teachers, new or experienced, feel about having another colleague observe them teach:

> I don't agree with my mentor coming in my class to observe me. I would be scared that my students would think I'm incompetent. Because of that, my mentor didn't visit my classroom and I appreciated that. Instead, we talked things through.

A glance down the first column of figures will reveal that in every case the 1999 figures are lower than all the previous years cited. This clearly indicates that fewer cases of non-participation occurred this year. The most dramatic improvement can be seen in mentors allowing beginning teachers to observe them in their own rooms. Viewed positively, this activity occurred with approximately three out of every four partnerships. From a negative perspective, 24% of the mentors still were not willing to invite their partners into their rooms. It is interesting to note that the level of participation on this item is still not quite as high as item 4 which measures the frequency with which beginning teachers managed to observe colleagues who were not their mentors. Although only item 5, (observe mentor teaching), was statistically significant, the overall results should be encouraging to the Steering Committee which has encouraged mentors to observe their beginning teachers and to invite them to reciprocate. Item 3, (mentor observes beginning teacher) narrowly missed being significant as the factor was 0.058. The improved scores in this and item 2 (receive feedback from mentor) strongly suggest that more mentors have been observing and conferencing with their partners. Scores for item one imply that this year partners have made more of an effort to hold regularly scheduled meetings in addition to the frequent informal contacts measured in Table 4.

Table 5

A percentage comparison of beginning teachers' participation rates in specific high-risk professional activities during the 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 BTIP

Professional Activities		Frequency 0	1 - 5	6-10	>10	*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01
1. Meet mentor in scheduled (formal) setting	1999	8.4	50.8	22.5	16.8	
	1998	17	52.3	17.6	13.1	
	1997	14.5	51.6	12.9	21	
	1996	15.3	71.9	4.6	7.6	
2. Receive feedback about my teaching from mentor	1999	16.8	52.4	13.6	14.1	
	1998	26.2	44.2	13.9	15.7	
	1997	27.4	38.7	16.1	17.7	
	1996	27	50.8	15.9	6.3	
3. Mentor observes me teach	1999	28.8	50.8	6.8	10.0	
	1998	41.5	45	8.2	5.3	
	1997	46.8	35.5	8.1	9.7	
	1996	46	46	7.9	3.2	
4. Observe other colleagues teaching (not mentor)	1999	22.5	58.6	10	6.8	
	1998	28.4	58.6	8.3	4.7	
	1997	22.6	62.9	8.1	6.4	
	1996	50	39.1	0	10.9	
5. Observe my mentor teaching in his/her own class	1999	24.1	52.9	8.4	10.5	
	1998	43.8	42.6	7.7	5.9	**
	1997	41.9	35.5	12.9	9.7	
	1996	51.6	40.3	0	8.1	

Beginning teachers were asked to indicate which of the activities, listed in both Tables 4 and 5, they wished had happened more often. As was the case in both 1998 and 1997, every one of the top four activities selected by the new teachers appears on the list of high-risk activities in Table 5. In 1999, the activity which the highest percentage (26%) wished had occurred more frequently was observing other colleagues teaching (25% in 1998). "Observing my mentor teaching in his/her own class" (20% compared to 30% in 1998) dropped to a second place tie with "mentor observes me teach" (22% in 1998). This reduction in perceived need is likely due to the increased opportunities which beginning teachers had to observe their mentors. "Receive feedback about my teaching from mentor" remained fourth with 16 percent both years.

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The highest number of requests for more frequent participation in Table 4 was for item 3 (share or research teaching materials, books, etc.) at 13%. Items 2 and 5 receives scores of 11% and 10% respectively. Clearly, beginning teachers felt they would have benefited professionally from increased exposure to many of the activities listed in both tables, but especially from those four activities in Table 5 which they wished had occurred more often.

In addition to the activities listed in the two tables, the beginning teachers' survey asked if there were opportunities to meet other mentees. The data suggest that approximately 85% of the new teachers had at least one opportunity to meet their peers, an increase from 77% a year earlier. Participants appeared to place moderate value on this activity since 11% wished there had been more opportunities. They were also asked whether they met with their mentors on a social basis out of school. Approximately 78% of the beginning teachers, compared to 71% in 1998, reported meeting their mentor socially out of school; 11% percent wished it had happened more often. While it may not be possible to draw any particular conclusions from these figures, they do provide some evidence of the extent to which social connections played a role in this induction program.

Participants' Perspectives on the Program: Strengths and Weaknesses

Before examining the individual perspectives reported by each of the participating groups, it may be helpful to compare their collective perceptions of the value of the Program. Each group was asked whether they recommended the continuation of the BTIP. While principals were asked to respond with a simple "yes" or "no", the other three groups were asked to indicate the degree of their support on a four-point Likert-style scale. If respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed", then this was interpreted as a "yes"; if they "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed", then it translated to a "no". Table 6 provides a four-year comparison of responses.

Table 6 reflects strong overall support for the continuation of the BTIP from all participating groups. The asterisk draws attention to the fact that beginning teachers in District 8 did not respond to this question because the final page of their survey was missing. Hence, the figures are not fully representative of beginning teachers in every district. The calculation of the percentage was based on the number who responded to this question. Hence the 98.8% figure reflects the provincial average without District 8. This is significant since this district had the largest number of beginning teachers (14% of the total).

Four principals did not respond to this question. The same method of calculation was used as for the beginning teachers. Everyone in the mentors' and coordinators' groups responded to this question.

Table 6

A four-year comparison of recommendations for continuation of the BTIP by beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and district coordinators

Group Respondents	1996	1997	1998	1999
Beginning Teachers	98.3 %	100 %	94.5 %	98.8 %*
Mentors	91.8	100	96.1	97.7
Principals	90	100	98.8	98
District Coordinators	100	100	100	100

* District 8 responses missing

A closer examination of the data reveals the strength of the support for the recommendation. Approximately 73% of beginning teacher respondents strongly agreed with the program recommendation statement; 26.2 % agreed with the statement. For mentors, the comparable figures were 67.3 % (strongly agreed) and 30.4 % (agreed). It seems highly likely that the two beginning teachers who strongly disagreed with the recommendation to continue the program, failed to interpret the two Likert-style questions correctly, since their comments and evaluations on other questions were all positive. Two principals did not recommend the continuation of the Program. Coordinators continue to give the highest recommendation to the Program with everyone indicating strong agreement.

Beginning Teachers' Perspectives

In the 1999 survey, 95.7 % of the beginning teachers indicated they either agreed (41.1%) or strongly agreed (54.6%) with the statement, " I feel that overall the BTIP has been beneficial to me as a beginning teacher". From an individual perspective, seven out of 163 participants felt that the Program was not beneficial to them. This marks a dramatic and significant improvement over the figure of 81.6% recorded in 1998 and is similar to the figure of 96% recorded in 1997. The figure is based on 163 replies since no responses were received from the 25 teachers in District 8 who completed the survey and from three others in different districts.

As in previous reports, there were many features of the BTIP which beginning teachers found helpful. The support and encouragement it provides new teachers figured predominantly in the numerous written comments. The comments of this teacher in District 15 were typical of the sentiments expressed by many others:

> I feel this program has been very beneficial to me this past year. Knowing that I had a teacher that was 'there' for me made me feel much more confident and strong. I strongly believe that all beginning teachers should have the opportunity to experience this.

Many of those who commented positively on the Program included remarks about the role played by their mentors. Again and again, beginning teachers attested to the variety of critical roles played by their mentors, from providing emotional support, to helping locate resources, to providing feedback on instructional practices. Although a more complete list of the ways mentors and their partners related can be seen in Tables 4 and 5, these three quotations are representative of their collective feelings:

> I loved [the] BTIP.... I felt that my mentor was holding my right hand and the district was holding the left one. I felt supported and important - not just 'the new one who knows nothing'. My ideas and feelings counted and mattered.
>
> - A beginning teacher in District 13

> I thoroughly enjoyed my year - a bit hectic at times.... [Name] was a true mentor. She helped me gather lots of curriculum, and neat ideas. I also appreciated the direction in regards to evaluation practices.
>
> - A beginning teacher in District 18

> I couldn't have asked for a better mentor. She always took the time to answer my questions. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of this great program!
>
> - A beginning teacher in District 4

Unsuccessful Partnerships. While it is evident that participating in the BTIP and having a mentor was viewed by most beginning teachers as a positive, professionally-developing experience, much can also be learned by examining the profiles of the seven teachers who did not find the Program beneficial. The outstanding characteristic of this group was that, with one exception, they had taught previously and they did not appreciate being treated as beginners. The one exception was a genuine beginning teacher who experienced personal incompatibility problems with her mentor and failed to alert her district coordinator to the difficulties.

The remaining six teachers who felt they did not benefit from the Program, already had teaching experience which ranged from long-term supply to five years of full-time teaching. Consequently, they found some of the BTIP activities were not suitable to their stage of development. This teacher, even though she had relatively limited previous experience, was typical of those who felt they did not belong in this program:

> I really didn't consider myself to be a 'new' teacher. I supply taught on a constant basis for one and a half years in another school district and had a six-month long-term supply position last year. Some of the activities weren't of much benefit to me. I do think the BTIP is very useful though for a 'real' beginning teacher.

Another teacher with five years teaching experience made several positive observations about the Program while clearly pointing out that, for him, the program came too late:

> The BTIP program is an excellent program, however, I would have benefited more had I been involved when I was an actual 'beginning teacher'. I have picked up a lot of useful information that was repeated during this program. I couldn't have been paired with a better mentor, and because of this, my learning continued. I strongly recommend all beginning teachers, including long-term supply teachers, continue to take this program.

A teacher with four years of previous teaching experience in the United States was frustrated by being mis-matched with a mentor who lacked sufficient background and skills to interact meaningfully with an experienced partner. She was further frustrated by being told that the funds had been exhausted when she finally asked to do something.

Certainly not all experienced 'beginning teachers' felt frustration with their partnership. Many comments echoed the sentiments of this teacher in District 16:

> Even though I was not a 'beginning teacher', the program was beneficial to me. It gave me time to utilize resources (my mentor), to learn the curriculum at my new grade level, to become familiar with new programs and practices, and [it] provided me with a compatible teacher with whom to officially consult when questions and concerns arise. My mentor was wonderful. In fact, she and I used this year as a foundation on which to build a team-teacher relationship for upcoming years. Thank you very much. It was a valuable experience.

If these teachers felt this way, one might also ask how mentors felt about being matched with experienced teachers. Were they intimidated or did they assume that collaboration was unnecessary? The experience of a specialist 'beginning teacher' with four years previous experience who was matched with a mentor who had a different teaching assignment, suggests that, in this case, the latter was true. No observation occurred and there was very little interaction between them. Since the mentors were not asked specifically whether their partners had previous experience, it was impossible to make connections unless mentors offered it. Only one of the five mentors who felt their partners had not benefited from the Program hinted that previous experience was a contributing factor. However, this quotation from District 18 provides one mentor's reflection on being assigned an 'experienced' beginning teacher.

> I would like to be a mentor to someone whose teaching career is actually just beginning. My BT had several previous years teaching experience, and I'm not sure in this case if it was necessary to participate in the program as they are not really beginning.

It is interesting to note, that despite their own reservations about the personal benefits of the BTIP, all of these mentor teachers recommended the continuation of the program for others.

Persistent Problems. The problems encountered at the local level by beginning teachers and mentors in the BTIP or other induction programs are reasonably well known from previous studies and from the literature. An important purpose of this item in the survey is to determine the extent to which progress is being made in addressing these obstacles. Beginning teachers were asked to indicate which of the conditions listed in Table 7 caused problems for them during the term of the program. By comparing the percentages of teachers who experienced specific difficulties this year with the figures for 1997 and 1998, it is possible to see whether overall progress is being made and which particular conditions need to be addressed.

Table 7

A comparison of the percentage of beginning teachers in the 1997, 1998, and 1999 induction programs who reported experiencing specific problems

condition causing problems	1997	1998	1999
lack of time	60 %	67.8 %	66 %
different teaching assignment to mentor	22	30.4	29.3
location of classroom relative to mentors	15	5.5	12.6
difficulty accessing BTIP funds	22	29.3	11
other (unique situations)	15	12.1	11
unclear expectations for BTIP	19	17.2	4.7
personal incompatibility with mentor	0	1.7	2.1

The perennial top two problem areas for induction partners remain lack of time and different teaching assignments. In this regard the New Brunswick findings are consistent with the literature in other jurisdictions (Ganser, 1996; Huffman & Leak, 1986). Sixty-five percent of the respondents felt they didn't have as much time for the BTIP as they needed. Approximately 28 % of these 126 individuals felt that time-related problems were significant. Despite wanting more time, many teachers, like this one in District 6, acknowledged the value of the time provided: "The BTIP has been very beneficial because it gave me a chance to learn and discuss, which are things that are not usually possible due to the time constraints of a new teacher."

As many of the following examples will reveal, participants suggested a great variety of reasons why so many found it difficult to find sufficient time for BTIP activities. Often these

reasons are complex, individualistic, and overlapping. Basic to the dilemma is the fact, reflected in many of the brief comments unreported here, that teachers' lives are extremely hectic.

Sometimes mentors caused the problem such as one situation in which the mentor was only available for one semester. In another situation, a mentor received an administrative appointment and consequently had less time to act as mentor. Sometimes it was the beginning teacher who had trouble keeping appointments. In an atypical case, a mentee had difficulty getting to after-school meetings because they were held at a considerable distance. In this situation, typical of a multi- school placement, a teacher in District 8 describes her difficulties:

> It was difficult working in two different schools; especially when a concern arose, because of my two school placement, I would often need more time to reflect with my mentor. We did meet once a week to accommodate any outstanding concerns. My mentor was absolutely wonderful.

At other times workloads had an impact. A District 4 beginning teacher said, "The first term was excellent. We had time to work together and meet often. Second term we were both four over four [teaching periods] so it made it difficult to meet formally. We did, however, have many informal meetings."

Increasing numbers of teachers lamented that the shortage of supply teachers made it difficult or impossible to take time from teaching to meet or to observe others. This situation seemed to be more acute in some districts than others. This is an unforseen circumstance which partially negates the assumptions of the Steering Committee that partners will use available funds to purchase supply time. A teacher in District 12 wrote:

> I found it very difficult to find the time to use any BTIP funds. For example, [it was] difficult to get a supply teacher to teach my area; there are always so many things to be done that it is hard to justify losing class time.

Another beginning art teacher in District 8 who taught half days in two separate schools for the equivalent of 4/4, found trying to arrange for supply teachers in her circumstances was not worth the effort:

> A severe shortage of available supply teachers does not help the BTIP program and it has been much easier to carry on without the additional stress of upheaval and reorganization from missed time.

Even when time was available, several beginning teachers expressed great reluctance to take time away from their classrooms.

After insufficient time, poor matching was the second most-frequently reported problem for beginning teachers. Approximately 29% said that being paired with a mentor whose grade level or subject assignment was different than theirs created difficulties in their professional

relationship. In extreme cases, mentors and partners were located in different schools. The 1999 figure remained virtually unchanged from 1998 when it was 30% and well above the 1997 figure of 22 %. Comments such as the following suggest that this situation is most acute in high schools:

> Given the situation of teaching music and [my mentor] teaching theatre arts and English 123, it was hard to share curriculum and lesson plans as well as resources. Had we both taught the same subject, it would not have been as difficult to relate to the other's subject.

The continuing large demand for mentors in the last two years may be contributing to increased difficulties arranging appropriate matches. However, a comparison of district figures reveals considerable differences. Some districts, despite having large numbers of participants, registered few complaints about mismatches, whereas others with fewer participants had high percentages of complaints. This may imply either that individual districts address this problem better than others or it may suggest that districts with partners in smaller schools are limited in their selection of mentors. Certainly this is a problem area which deserves careful monitoring by district coordinators.

Table 7 indicates that significant progress has been made this year in addressing problems concerned with funding and unclear expectations. Difficulty accessing BTIP funds dropped from being a problem for 29% in 1998 to 11% in 1999 ; only two teachers felt it was a significant problem. At the end of the 1997-98 school year the Steering Committee established an Ad Hoc committee to deal with this problem. Evidently it was successful. One reason for the Committee's success may have been the development and deployment of the reference binder (A Guide to The New Brunswick Beginning Teacher Induction Program: A Partnership that Builds Success), referred to earlier. In addition, the efforts of the NBTA professional development director to improve communication concerning NBTA funding should also be acknowledged as an important contribution.

It is probable that the Guide can also take some credit for the improved score in addressing the problem of unclear BTIP expectations. In 1999 only 5% felt this created problems, compared to 17% in 1998. Since over half of the teachers who reported this problem teach in Districts 12 and 13, it may be possible to address this issue locally.

The third most common problem identified in Table 7 was the lack of proximity between mentors' and beginning teachers' classrooms. The most recent figure of 12.6% marks a slight improvement over the two previous years. Four of the twenty-four who identified this as a problem, felt it was significant. An analysis of individual figures suggests that some districts have been more successful than others in arranging proximity. While improvements in this figure are worthwhile goals, it is unrealistic to expect that all partners will be located near one another. Since this topic is addressed in the Guide, possibly the best-case scenario is to continue communicating its importance to those responsible for the matching, to expect them to do their best in their circumstances, and be prepared to accept a continuing number of cases each year.

Eleven percent cited particular problems which did not fall into the pre-determined categories. Many of these 21 cases involved partners (often specialists) who worked in multiple schools. They represent, in fact, extreme examples of the categories discussed previously. Although a few districts managed to avoid these difficult arrangements, the examples are quite widely dispersed across the province. There may be an onus on coordinators who are aware of the problems which these arrangements create, to bring them to the attention of the administrators responsible for hiring, so that they will be better able to weigh the personal costs against the value of administrative convenience.

Mentors' Perspectives

Although both the expressed and the intended purpose of the BTIP is to support beginning teachers, the mentor survey data indicate clearly that the experienced teachers who volunteer to act as mentors feel they also are beneficiaries of the Program. Possibly the strongest evidence of this is the finding that 98.2 % of the mentors agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I feel that overall the BTIP has been beneficial to me from a professional perspective". In negative terms this means that only three out of 171 respondents indicated that they did not personally benefit from their involvement. It is interesting to note that these same three, plus two other mentors, also felt that their partners did not benefit. Perhaps the surprising finding is that two of the five, although feeling this way about their partners, still felt that they had gained personally from the experience.

The consistency between the perceptions of the mentors and the beginning teachers on the question of whether the latter had benefited from the BTIP is noteworthy. As reported in the previous section, 95.6 % of the beginning teachers felt they had benefited; mentors indicated that, from their perspective, 96.5 % of their partners had a beneficial experience.

Of the 174 mentors in the Program, 86.8 % said they would be willing to act as a mentor again; 6.3 % indicated they would not; the remainder did not reply, were unsure, or were retiring. Although the first figure represents a drop from 92 % last year and from 93 % in 1997, the 6.3 % who said, "no" is similar to last year's figure of 6.9.

Many of the mentors' unsolicited comments either complimented the Program or offered reflections on the role of the mentor. A District 2 mentor described the role as "very similar to acting as a cooperating teacher except the relationship is peer/peer rather than teacher/student." A mentor in District 14 proclaimed that, "I think it is the best thing that has happened for new teachers and I strongly support the NBTA and Department of Education for staying involved." Another mentor in District 16 wrote:

> This is a great experience for someone such as myself with 22 years of teaching. My fellow younger teacher's enthusiasm was a delight. I gave her ideas and suggestions as well as moral support. She, in turn, did exactly the same for me.

The mentors' survey asked what had been the positive aspects of the BTIP for them. As in previous reports, the responses were both articulate and numerous. Six slightly overlapping themes emerged from the data. All of the themes seemed to emerge from the affective or feeling side of the mentors' personalities, although a couple of them certainly incorporate cognitive elements as well. It is always difficult to put labels on what essentially amounts to people's expressions of good feelings, but the following six themes seemed to account for all of the mentors' responses to what had been positive aspects of the BTIP:

1) Contributing to the personal and professional development of another person.
2) Reflecting on one's own teaching resulted in personal growth.
3) Working in a collegial relationship opened new horizons for the workplace.
4) Receiving new ideas and inspiration from one's exposure to a recent graduate.
5) Feeling valued by partners and colleagues.
6) Developing new friendships.

Theme one, **helping others**, illustrates the strong sense of personal satisfaction mentors take from sharing their expertise with less-experienced colleagues so that the latter can make successful transitions from student teachers to teachers. Mentors saw themselves as providing both emotional and practical support which took many forms, as the following quotations illustrate:

> My BT almost quit about Thanksgiving. Things have improved from there. He is returning next year and seems settled and happy in the profession at this point. I can't take all the credit, but I was one of the support mechanisms in place.
>
> - District 10 mentor

> [I've enjoyed] being able to assist beginning teachers in getting grounded in several respects of teaching - planning, discipline, coping, and organization.
>
> - District 13 mentor

> It was a personal job satisfaction to be able to assist a new teacher, work on curriculum plans, provide collegial support, and to help develop teaching strategies as well as self-confidence.
>
> - District 17 mentor

> It has made me very aware of the need to have a support person for the BT. I believe that it helped my BT adjust more smoothly to the responsibilities she faced.
>
> - District 14 mentor

Theme two, **self improvement**, includes the sentiment expressed by many mentors who said that having to justify their advice on teaching strategies caused them to reflect on their own methods. This self-evaluation resulted in personal insights which they felt made them better

teachers. In addition, their exposure to professional opportunities as participants in the BTIP further encouraged personal professional development. The following quotations attempt to capture these ideas:

> It helps me reflect on the effectiveness of methods one already uses in terms of evaluating results, teaching methods and approaches.
>
> - District 8 mentor

> It made me look at my philosophy of teaching practices, especially when having to explain to my mentee 'how to' and 'why' I did certain things.
>
> - District 4 mentor

> The BTIP has not only helped me with my own teaching, but has made me more aware of what is going on in our own school. I feel I am more sensitive to other teachers' needs. If I sense someone having a hard day, the BTIP has given me information which I use to help.
>
> - District 17 mentor

> [The BTIP] helped get my portfolio and goals organized. [I was] able to meet and talk with other teachers, old and new, on professional practices.
>
> - District 10 mentor

> [It] reinforced positive ideas and helped to correct and improve some ideas that I had. I found it very beneficial.
>
> - District 12 mentor

Theme three, **collegiality**, refers to the positive feelings mentors experienced from working closely with a colleague, in this case, a beginning teacher. In addition to the direct and indirect benefits implicit in some of the other themes, many of the remarks indicated that the collegial relationship itself was a positive feature which many teachers had not experienced previously. The first quotation seems to capture this feeling, whereas the others provide variations on this theme. The final quotation suggests that what the Program really promotes is a form of forced collegiality, a term used by Hargreaves (1994). The mentor suggests that, despite its coercive undertones, the results can be quite positive.

> It was the first time I had the opportunity to work closely with another teacher and it was a great learning experience.
>
> - District 13 mentor

> It's good for the new teacher to have an 'ear', AND, it is good for me to have an 'ear' too. All too often, teachers, both 'old' and 'new' become 'islands'.
>
> - District 13 mentor

> It is nice to be able to share ideas, materials, etc. with another teacher. We discussed curriculum, and student behaviour. I enjoyed observing her teach and when she came to my room.
>
> - District 4 mentor

> I enjoyed being able to discuss curriculum with another teacher as we are in a small school and this does not always happen.
>
> - District 16 mentor

> I believe I've learned as much as the mentee. It was truly a symbiotic relationship - a lot of give and take on both sides. [I] became a better listener and constantly re-evaluated what I was doing.
>
> - District 13 mentor

> The program requires 'enforced collegiality' but in a very positive way. The beginning teacher will always now seek out help at a new school - knows what's available and what is needed to make life easier. The mentor doesn't realize how much he/she can actually help.
>
> - District 17 mentor

Theme four, **gifts from beginning teachers**, highlights the observation that mentors received benefits from their partners as well as gave them. As the following examples illustrate, many mentors felt energized by the enthusiasm of the new teachers; as well, they picked up a lot of new ideas:

> A beginning teacher arrives with new ideas and lots of energy and this energy as well as the new ideas are very uplifting and extremely helpful.
>
> - District 8 mentor

> It helped to keep me young, more enthusiastic, and it causes me to re-visit my ideals.
>
> - District 12 mentor

> I have learned so much from my partner. I have received feedback about my teaching. I have learned a new way to assess teaching. I have been able to share my experience.
>
> - District 17 mentor

Theme five, **feeling valued**, tries to capture the good feelings which mentors described when their own worth as an expert teacher was recognized, either by their partners, their peers, or by themselves.

> I didn't realize that someone could actually look to me for help and that I had the ability to make someone's teaching life easier.
>
> - District 17 mentor

> It was nice to feel that I really had something to contribute.
>
> - District 4 mentor

> To be asked was an honour.
>
> - District 18 mentor

> It is a good feeling to be consulted for advice and guidance. I certainly wish this was available when I started.
>
> - District 4 mentor

> It allowed me to give [my partner] a letter of recommendation for her portfolio. I enjoyed this experience during my final year of teaching.
>
> - District 17 mentor

The final theme, **friendship**, although related to the theme of collegiality, has a less professional tone to it. As the following quotations suggest, mentors valued the friendships which grew out of the BTIP:

> All aspects, for me, were positive, but especially getting to know and develop a friendship with my mentee.
>
> - District 15 mentor

> [I enjoyed] the great talks we had about teaching techniques and students in particular, and our philosophy on teaching. I made a friend.
>
> - District 4 mentor

Persistent Problems In their survey, mentors were asked, "What aspects of being a mentor have you disliked?" Thirty-one percent indicated there wasn't anything they disliked and another 18% did not reply. However, the remaining 51% identified similar problems to their partners. Lack of time or the amount of time required for BTIP activities was mentioned by 32% of the mentors. One teacher astutely summed up the dilemma over the shortage of time when she said, [There was] "not enough time to do all of the things we would have liked."

A District 13 mentor, by objecting to the word "dislike", added new meaning to the question. She wrote, "I wish I would have had more time. Not a dislike, just a reality." A mentor in District 18 expressed similar feelings in these words:

> In no way whatsoever is there a negative associated with the program. Rather I would look at how I could have been more realistic in putting together a set of initiatives that better reflect our individual schedules and demands on time.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of teachers seemed bothered by their inability to find enough time to meet the responsibilities they felt as mentors. A District 14 mentor disliked "trying to schedule time to meet. With our busy schedule, it has been a headache at times to find

the time and also a feeling of not really doing enough." Another was bothered by "the fact that we couldn't get together for an extended period of time. It takes time and dedication to be a good mentor." Still another said there simply was "not time to help, although we did schedule time, sometimes time took on a life of its own." A District 8 mentor who complained that "it is very difficult to get together after a very busy day," suggested "that a half day a month should be set aside; you bring the positive and negative to the table at that time." This suggestion to schedule regular meeting times was echoed by a number of mentors in various districts. Ganser (1999) addresses this issue by suggesting that planning meetings in advance enables mentors and their partners to make the most of their limited time together. He also provides helpful guidelines to make these meetings more effective.

On the other hand, a mentor in District 2, initially concerned about time, was pleasantly surprised: "At first I thought it was going to be a very time-consuming task, but [I] soon realized that each meeting was as beneficial to myself as it was to my BT." A District 17 mentor wrote: "It seemed time consuming at first, but once our relationship grew, I looked forward to meeting formally and informally." Undoubtedly a mentor's personal perspective played a role in determining whether meeting times were a chore or a pleasure. After-school meetings posed a chore for some mentors as these examples illustrate:

> The after-school meetings seemed to be rushed and came off as just something to get through as part of the BTIP agenda. I did find some value, however, in talking with other participants.

> Sometimes [it] felt like we were obliged to do things when time didn't necessarily permit.

Although lack of time, time commitment, and inconvenient meeting times created the most problems for mentors, eight individuals (5%) drew attention to the difficulties they felt that curricular mis-matches created for them as mentors. Although their numbers are relatively small, these articulate voices deserve to be heard so their perspectives can be understood:

> Most of the subjects taught by BT were not in my field and I couldn't provide him with resources; I felt helpless sometimes.
>
> - A District 6 Mentor

> The mentorship role is taken to another level when you are asked to work with someone who is not a teacher of the same subject assigned. I felt the purpose of my assignment as mentor was not only to assist, discuss, and provide information on subjects. It involved handing over ideas for every project in the designated grade level. Which is completely acceptable if the mentee is able to expand. Without proper training that can be extremely difficult. My mentee was very enjoyable to work with, but I'm not sure she benefited from this in the way of developing curriculum.
>
> - A District 2 Mentor

Twelve teachers (7%) described other variations of mis-match problems which complicated their roles as mentors. One person mentioned that language had been a barrier. This occurred in a district which paired beginning French teachers with anglophones. Another completely different kind of problem involved a department head who discovered that his supervisory duties conflicted with his role as a mentor:

> I am department head over this individual and have found it somewhat difficult to be a mentor and evaluate at the same time, given the fact that he had a somewhat difficult year.

This case is an excellent illustration why the BTIP Guide recommends that teachers with positions of responsibility should not volunteer to act as mentors.

Not only mentors with supervisory responsibilities discovered that their position created personal tension. Several regular mentors indicated that they found it difficult to offer advice when their protegees experienced serious discipline problems. In fact, feeling responsible for their partners' actions caused chagrin for these two mentors in District 8:

> [I disliked] offering words of advice, cautioning certain methods of approach used by the beginning teacher (as to meetings or dealings with individuals) and these ideas are taken too lightly at times, when actually they are serious and need reflection.

> [I disliked] being held accountable for things that my mentee didn't know to do. I cannot follow up on all explanations given. I was often blamed (by mentee and others) for their mistakes.

It seems obvious that some mentors' roles will be more demanding than others. However, this can also be a measure of the extent to which a beginning teacher needs, but may not appreciate, the help a skilful mentor can provide.

Principals' Perspectives

Beginning in 1998, the principals' survey asked administrators to describe the extent of their personal involvement in the BTIP. Four categories of principals' involvement emerged. Although somewhat arbitrary, they can be classified as no involvement, minimal involvement, active involvement, and extensive involvement. A principal with no involvement is aware of the program but generally lacks detailed information and does not get directly involved with the participants. Minimal involvement describes principals who are aware of the program and who try to be supportive, but their actual involvement consists of peripheral contacts like passing on memos, making suggestions, or asking occasional questions about the program. The third level, active involvement, combines the characteristics described in category two with the active components of selecting mentors and/or arranging supply teachers for the partners. Finally,

extensive involvement describes those principals who become very involved with the BTIP. In addition to category 3 activities, they attend and/or arrange meetings, debrief participants, and in extreme cases, act as mentors themselves. Although the categories are somewhat arbitrary and classifying the principals' comments involved some subjectivity, I feel that the overall picture of principal involvement is reasonably accurate. Table 8, which follows, compares the percentages of the 80 principals in 1998 and 103 in 1999 who fell into each of the categories.

Table 8 suggests that principals were slightly less involved in the BTIP in 1999, but the differences were not significant. What the table does not reveal is that the number of principals who acted as mentors rose from two in 1998 to six in 1999. This is significant because it goes against recommended practices for induction programs and our own experiences in New Brunswick. Presumably, principals took this action because they could not find enough volunteers to act as mentors.

Table 8

A two-year comparison of principal involvement in the BTIP

Categories	percentage involvement	
	1997-98	1998-99
1. No Involvement	30 %	39 %
2. Minimal Involvement	33	31
3. Active Involvement	30	22
4. Extensive Involvement	8	7

As they had the previous year, principals were asked if they had received clear, comprehensive, and timely information regarding the BTIP during the school year. Eighty-five percent replied they had, an improvement from 74% in 1998. Only 10% felt uninformed; the remainder did not reply. A review of the principals' comments makes it clear that District Coordinators made a concerted effort, especially at the beginning of the year, to provide BTIP information to administrators. This conclusion is based on the fact that the negative 10% were widely dispersed across the province and the negative comments of one principal were generally contradicted by the positive ones of several others in the same district. As a case in point, these two contradictory comments came from principals in the same district:

> All information was provided in handouts and e-mails. Information was continuous/updated and informative.

> I feel I am unaware of how the BTIP works and how it benefits teachers.

When asked the open-ended question "From your perspective, which elements of the BTIP do you think are working well", principals responded in descending frequency, as follows:

1) mentor support for the beginning teacher (43 responses)
2) release time for partners (20 responses)
3) in-service training and professional development for partners (19)
4) classroom visits (12)
5) resource purchases (9)
6) development of collegial relationships (7)
7) benefits to mentors (3)
8) financial support (3)
9) benefits for principals (3)
10) support of district office and district coordinators (2)
11) workshop on BTIP for administrators (2)
12) recognition of mentors (2)

Although many of the items are similar to the positive aspects of the mentors, a list of this nature provides insight into which elements principals assigned particular value. New insights also emerge, such as the workshop held in District 12 to inform principals about the BTIP. In addition, some administrators were evidently aware of and appreciated the efforts made by the Department of Education to issue certificates to all mentors in recognition of their contributions and service.

Several principals acknowledged that the induction program had a direct benefit for them. A District 10 principal observed that, " New teachers benefit from the partnership and there is less need for administrative intervention. This is a time saver for the principal."

When the results of this question are combined with the principals' suggestions for improvements and additional comments, the varying perspectives which administrators have toward this Program become more evident, and deserve closer examination. For example, twenty principals thought that the release time feature (supply teachers available to allow mentors and beginning teachers time to meet during school time), was working well. Many principals applauded this feature and commented on its value. Yet several principals objected to the time away from class because of the negative effect it had on students. Here is the comment of one principal:

> Like everything we do for teachers, it's at the expense of class time. I think students lose when they are being taught by supply teachers. This is one program which could be conducted on teacher time.

Another principal in a different district also seemed to be objecting to release time when he wrote:

> The time out of the classroom is problematic - especially if the teachers are also involved in other workshops, meetings, etc. that take them out of school. We had two complaints from parents about the number of days one teacher missed.

While these individuals represent a small minority, their comments are worth noting. The comments may imply that these principals have not been exposed to any literature on induction programs and do not appreciate both the symbolic value and the practical importance of providing release time during the regular teaching day. Mentors cannot observe their partners teach after the children have gone home. On the other hand, principals may face genuine situations which negatively affect their students. Clearly there is a need for district coordinators to be sensitive to principals' attitudes and address them collectively in specially-designed workshops and discussion groups, or individually, as deemed appropriate..

Another issue which one principal raised is whether there should be a connection between a principal's supervisory responsibilities and the activities of the induction program. The principal suggested that elements of the BTIP "become part of the evaluation the principals have to do on the beginning teachers - a form or portfolio review become a component to be handed in to the personal file." While BTIP activities may contribute to the development of portfolio components, that should not be a primary goal and the suggestion to connect evaluation/ supervision to the BTIP or any other induction program would likely destroy the collegial relationship between the mentor and the beginning teacher. This point is reinforced by a District 13 principal who urged, "Continue to stress that the mentor role is entirely non-evaluative." Knowing that such attitudes and mis-information exist, should alert district coordinators and directors to the continuing need to address this issue with principals in a session dedicated specifically to administrators roles with respect to the BTIP.

The data from the principals' survey revealed that a smaller, but still significant number of principals, still feel poorly informed about the program. A principal in District 8 made an appeal to "keep principals in the loop; notify us of meetings, information". Another in District 16 suggested "a meeting with all concerned at the very beginning, including the principal." A District 18 principal observed that he felt "the principal is a bit out of the loop in the decision making and input of needs of the teacher being mentored". This comment contrasts with another from the same district who indicated a quandary undoubtedly faced by many of his peers: "This year I just kind of left this program to the mentor and the BT. [I'm] not sure if this was correct or if, as a principal, I would be expected to be more actively involved."

While the data imply that some districts have been able to commit more time and resources than others to the roles administrators can play in the BTIP, this should remain a high priority for all coordinators. Principals seem to want more guidance on the extent to which they ought to get involved in the BTIP.

Despite identifying areas which could be improved, 98 % of the principals recommended the continuation of the provincial induction program. Two principals (twice as many as last year) did not want it continued. Both were from the same district. One reported difficulty in obtaining volunteer mentors and consequently filled that role personally. The workload made it impossible for this individual to visit the partner's class and we can assume this situation was less than ideal for both the mentor/principal and partner. Although undoubtedly this principal did so with the best of intentions, this over-extension had negative consequences and serves as a reminder of why administrators should not act as mentors.

The other principal objected strongly to teacher-release time for BTIP activities and maintained that "this program reinforces the attitude in teachers that professional growth is the employer's responsibility." This principal wrote:

> I am tired of hearing teachers say, 'but we're professionals', yet they act very much like union workers. Perhaps the money allotted for supply teachers for this program could be offered to mentors and beginning teachers for other things - materials, workshops, etc.. With appropriate incentives, maybe this program could be offered after the school day.

Despite the negativism of the preceding examples, many principals praised both the goals and the accomplishments of the BTIP. They recognized the benefits for both beginning teachers and mentors and appeared to take the long-range view that happy, knowledgeable teachers who feel supported by their colleagues will be more skilful and effective in the classroom. A principal in District 10 extended the benefits beyond the partners when he said, "I felt this was positive for teachers involved, both new teacher and mentor. Both took great opportunity to develop professionally. This only served as a positive example for other staff." Another called it " a very positive experience/win-win situation for beginning teacher, mentor, and our school."

Several called for the program's expansion to include long-term supply teachers or teachers in need of renewal. One indication of the value principals attach to the induction model came from three principals in different districts who recommended that a similar program be developed for new administrators.

Many of the principals' comments and suggestions are specific to their own school or district and will be most meaningful for the district coordinators in their local context. Hopefully, the principals' helpful ideas were noted before the questionnaires were forwarded for analysis.

District Coordinators' Perspectives

Survey returns from the coordinators revealed that only two were first-year appointments, a significant change from1998 when there were six new faces. Four were returning

to their coordinator's position, four were doing it for the third time, and two had held the position since 1995. All twelve felt that they were the logical choice for the appointment. As in previous years, every BTIP district coordinator recommended the continuation of the Program. Since the responsibility for the success or failure of the BTIP depends so heavily on them perhaps their level of commitment should come as no surprise.

As in previous years, the district coordinators made many insightful comments when asked to describe the positive features of their involvement. One of the first-time coordinators wrote:

> Wonderful Program! It is nice to see seasoned teachers recharge their energy and enthusiasm as they work with beginning teachers. Beginning teachers need the support to cope with all of the challenges of their first year teaching.

Other coordinators echoed similar sentiments. An experienced coordinator felt good about "being able to support a new teacher with the backing of the [Dept. of Education, district office personnel, NBTA, and principals]. It must convey a strong message."

Because of their insider perspective as members of the Steering Committee and because they also hold positions as district supervisors at the district level, they occupy key positions from which to communicate to the various stake-holders and to use their leadership and organizational skills to meet the goals of the Program. However, it is important to realize that their success is also dependent on the good-will and cooperation of the other stakeholders. This refers particularly to Tom Hanley, the Department of Education representative and Steering Committee Chair, Dwain McLean, the NBTA representative on the Committee (he administers the NBTA portion of funding for the BTIP), the various district officials, and the principals in the participating schools.

The coordinators were asked whether they felt they had received adequate support from the Department of Education, the NB Teachers' Association, their district office, and the school principals in their own district. Table 9, which follows, displays their answers to this question.

While the majority of coordinators felt that the various stakeholders were providing adequate support, the feeling was not unanimous. Compared to the previous year, improvements can be noted in every category. All of the coordinators found the Department's support adequate. Only one indicated that the NBTA support was inadequate, although two felt it was marginal. All but one were satisfied with the support of their office staff; two more coordinators than last year were satisfied with the support of principals in their district. Clearly, the two stakeholders which coordinators want stronger support from are the NBTA and the principals.

Table 9

A two-year comparison of District Coordinators (N=12) perceptions of support from different BTIP stakeholders

	level of perceived support							
	Adequate		marginal		inadequate		not applicable	
stakeholders	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
Dept of Education	11	12			1			
NBTA	8	9		2	4	1		
District offices	8	11	1		1		2	1
School principals	6	8	2	1	2	2	2	1

Two coordinators indicated that lack of principals' support was their most challenging problem. In one case, "principals were not encouraging mentors and beginning teachers to participate in the program"; in the other, there was "not enough follow-up with administration". Another district coordinator had a slightly different perspective:

> I was disappointed in the reduction in funding from the NBTA. I am not pleased with the support from the school principals, but I do not fault them. They are inundated with so many things that it is difficult to ask more of them. I am attempting to improve this through a number of initiatives, i.e. having a pool established up front.

Because of other responsibilities, district coordinators must seek ways to balance their BTIP obligations with other priorities. The District 2 coordinator found the provincial coordinators' meetings very helpful and urged their continuation. Another coordinator commented on the value of the new Guide and encouraged the addition of references such as templates (e.g. invitations, letters, agendas) which coordinators use regularly. The District 12 coordinator indicated that sharing responsibility for the program among three curriculum supervisors had been a positive feature in their district. The coordinator in District 17 tried a different strategy:

> This year I tried to have more involvement at the school level rather than initiating a lot of district-wide inservice. I believe in ongoing types of professional development and I thought the teachers themselves could better decide what their needs were rather than imposing what I thought they should have. Therefore, I limited the inservices to three and I think I achieved a balance.

While attempts at balancing priorities will continue for the coordinators, their comments make it clear that a positive feature of the BTIP will always be sharing in "the excitement of beginning teachers and mentors as they planned and participated in activities".

One feature of the BTIP which provides satisfaction to coordinators is seeing beginning teachers re-hired the following year. In April of 1999, the district coordinators estimated that approximately 70 % of the beginning teachers who participated in the BTIP would receive full-time positions in September. The reasons for not re-hiring varied: anticipated drop in student population, teachers returning from educational leave, no vacancies. Late in September, I checked these figures with the three largest districts (Saint John, Fredericton, and Moncton) because they had indicated the lowest return rates in the province. Each had hired more than expected and I estimate that the rate of retention for beginning teachers will be at least 90 %.

Persistent Problems One of the school supervisors who has served as a district coordinator for three years, identified three perennial problems:

1. Latecomers to the program - teachers are not hired until after school begins for unforseen reasons.
2. Young people are hired as long-term supply teachers and do not receive a contract until it is too late for them to benefit from the Program.
3. Finding appropriate mentor-beginning teacher matches is becoming increasingly difficult and that role is time consuming every year. Small schools are often reliant on the principal for the task every year.

A colleague echoed the second point when he said, "We need to know what to do with people who are long-term supply and are also new teachers".

Finding a more effective way to track funding and to explain it clearly to a new group each year could constitute a fourth recurring problem for coordinators. A year ago, the coordinators' strongest complaints were directed at the confusion caused by the funding arrangements. This year, although funding difficulties were still front and centre, the tone of the comments was less strident and the problems were more generalized. One district coordinator said that "not knowing the exact amount expected from the NBTA" and "the time frame for spending the money" caused a problem. Another wrote:

> I believe the new funding arrangement established this year worked well. I have a greater sense that the money from the Department of Education will be there. I am less confident in the NBTA resources. There always seems to be a delay, a reluctance or an inclination of not wanting to support the program.

Because of their key roles, district coordinators feel the pressure from all directions. Yet when asked what specific problems they encountered, they were relatively brief. Four mentioned financial or accounting matters; the coordinators in Districts 14 and 16 were concerned about the lack of supply teachers. One wrote:

> It is almost impossible to bring both the mentors and beginning teachers together on a working day for an entire group meeting. We do not have the supply teachers and even if we did, the number of supply teachers in some schools would cause havoc.

Three coordinators were disappointed when mentor selections or partnerships did not work out as well as they hoped. One expressed her dilemma when principals selected mentors whom she felt were not appropriate choices:

> Mentor selection in two cases was not as promising as I had hoped. Principals gave me names after having asked the teacher. By then it's awkward to change. I hope to remedy this (not sure how at this time of writing).

Two coordinators mentioned that finding enough time to do all they wanted to do created problems for them. Quite naturally, one coordinator felt frustrated when he heard about teachers' complaints for the first time in the year-end surveys.

Continuing Issues and Suggestions for Improvement

This section of the report will attempt to identify and discuss several issues which emerged from the preceding presentation of data. Whenever relevant, suggestions for improvement from the participating groups will be incorporated into the discussions.

Issue 1 - Who should qualify as a beginning teacher?

Although this issue was present in previous reports, the current data seems to indicate that more beginning teachers than ever before actually have considerable previous teaching experience. The estimated total number in this category is slightly less than half of 253 beginning teachers, or roughly 125 people. The key question is whether or not the Program, as it is presently constituted, is appropriate for this group, all of whom have varying degrees of previous experience. Roughly 40% of the 125 have had full-time experience in another district, province, or state. The remainder have varying lengths of supply teaching experience. The report cited examples of 'experienced beginning teachers' who felt they did not belong in this program and examples of mentors who indicated that their partners did not benefit fully because of previous experience. Six of the seven who felt they did not benefit from the program were 'experienced beginners'. On the other hand, many 'experienced beginners' acknowledged their previous experience, but still felt they gained a lot from the Program.

Should any teacher who is new to a district be eligible? Should anyone with more than a year's teaching experience be accepted into the Program? Where does one draw a line which is professionally reasonable and fiscally responsible?

The data from the Beginning Teachers' and Mentors' Surveys suggests to me that some of this year's participants should not have been included. While District 12 decided to use local funds to include long-term supply teachers in its program, other districts managed to include teachers with far more experience in the provincially-funded program. Several of the comments of participants and my own intuition support District 12's position as being very appropriate and

proactive from the perspective of teacher induction. Clearly, teachers need the support an induction program can provide when they are in their first two years of teaching. After that, possibly a different kind of mentoring program may be more appropriate. At some point induction needs to be replaced by professional improvement, peer coaching, or various other programs designed specifically for experienced teachers.

I suggest that clearer guidelines for who qualifies as a beginning teacher need to be articulated and implemented in order to protect the integrity of the BTIP. Possibly the Steering Committee or another designated committee could be empowered to investigate the need for professional development programs especially designed for new/beginning administrators or for experienced teachers.

Issue 2 - Can the current BTIP model be adapted to meet the needs of specialist teachers?

Both beginning teachers and mentors indicated that when they did not share a common grade level and/or subject specialization, it placed an additional strain on their partnership. This situation is especially problematic when one or more of the partners is a specialist or itinerant teacher (often the two coincide). Several principals asked whether a different mentoring model might be more appropriate for itinerant specialists. I have not seen any literature on this subject, but it seems to me that some variations are worth exploring. In larger districts there might be a critical mass of specialists to justify holding periodic meetings or workshops which would bring both new and experienced specialists together. Rather than using a model which matches a specialist with a single mentor (who often has little in common) in a teacher's school of record, the 'specialist mentor' model could arrange meetings of new and experienced specialists to share ideas, discuss teaching strategies, and form personal connections which could be maintained by telephone or email between meetings.

Over the years of the BTIP, it appears that some examples of this have informally developed because of the large numbers of French Second Language and Immersion teachers who were hired. If the district coordinators could share their experiences, better ways of dealing with beginning specialist teachers may emerge.

Issue 3 - How can we better inform and involve principals in the BTIP?

Both principals and district coordinators acknowledged the continuing need not only to keep administrators better informed about the district-wide activities of the BTIP, but also to provide opportunities for them to discuss their responsibilities and possible roles in the Program. Issues such as evaluation, funding, and release time for participants need to be discussed and clarified at the district level. District coordinators have improved their lines of communication, but with limited time and endless possibilities, they find it difficult to arrange their priorities so they can commit the time to work directly with principals on BTIP concerns. It may be helpful for coordinators to discuss their situations with their Directors in order to determine priorities.

Issue 4 - How can we make funding information more accessible and transparent?

The data from all surveys indicate that significant improvement has been made in explaining the complicated dual system of funding for the BTIP. Yet a number of complaints, especially from mentors and principals, suggests that sometimes teachers discovered that district funds had been exhausted before they tried to use them. Participants suggested allocating a specific number of supply days to each pair, thus insuring an equal distribution of the resources. Several observed that if funds were not spent early in the year, they might not get any at all.

I concluded from the comments that all groups of participants want more and clearer information on funding at the district level, in particular regarding NBTA allocations. Concern was also expressed that as the number of participants increases, the NBTA portion per pair diminishes. There also seems to be a continuing need to hold a workshop designed specifically to train district coordinators or their support staff on how to account for the funds and to communicate this information effectively to administrators and teachers.

Issue 5 - Can we adapt the BTIP to cope with shortages of supply teachers?

Release time for partners is a basic premise of the BTIP. It assumes that supply teachers will be available to allow teachers to attend BTIP workshops, to observe one another, or to meet for discussion and planning during the school day. When supply teachers are not available or are in short supply, as has been the case in many parts of the province this year, then the program suffers disruption. Those disruptions led to adaptations which may have implications for the Program. Participants in each of the four groups expressed frustration because of the supply teacher shortage. Consequently, some districts restricted the number of large meetings held during school hours; others broke large groups into smaller ones for meetings, or held meetings after school. Some partners reported they could not observe one another because they could not get a supply teacher. Others gave up trying because they felt the effort was not worth it. When funds intended for release time could not be spent, partners asked for more freedom in the spending guidelines.

General indications are that the supply teacher shortage will continue to deteriorate for several years. Some districts seem to be trying innovative ways to circumvent this problem while remaining true to the principles of teacher induction. Coordinators need opportunities to share their ideas and to brainstorm new ways to insure participants have access to release time during school hours.

Among the participants' suggestions which related to release time was a call for greater emphasis on matching teachers according to grade level, subjects taught, and the physical proximity of their classrooms. Individuals in each of the participant categories suggested an earlier start to the Program, with mentor training before school begins. Other suggestions included coordinating partners' preparation periods, not giving four-over-four teaching assignments to beginning teachers, and providing workshops on time management.

Issue 6 - Is increased structure appropriate and/or desirable?

A number of mentors, beginning teachers, and principals recommended that district coordinators schedule regular meetings of partners or beginning teachers. Two factors seem to be related to this proposition: one is the expressed need for beginning teachers to meet their peers more often; the other is the human tendency to perform when required and to relax when not. This was not an issue for district coordinators who find it difficult to organize as much as they do at present. However, its intent is to highlight the evidence which suggests that some participants, (not all) would appreciate opportunities of this nature. Possibly the interested ones could be identified and they could be asked to take leadership in organizing the sessions themselves, if coordinators cannot.

Several principals suggested that they would like BTIP participants to prepare reports, speak to the staff, develop portfolios, or prepare a book of hints to pass on to successive groups of participants. While there may be merit in some of these suggestions, I would caution against incursions into the core of the Program, which is support for the new teacher. Demands which add to partners' workloads or steal from their limited release time should be resisted. On the other hand, it is in everyone's interest to inform staff about the format and goals of the program so that others can consider volunteering as future mentors. Coordinators might be the best people to address this issue with principals. Sensitivity to the participants' needs, respect for the Program guidelines, and common sense, should be primary considerations on this issue.

Recommendations

1. The BTIP Steering Committee should re-examine its criteria for beginning teachers and develop guidelines which recognize that the needs of long-term supply teachers with limited experience are significantly different from teachers who are new to a district but have more than two years of full-time service.

2. The Chair of the Steering Committee should advise the Deputy-minister of Education that several principals have requested an induction program for new principals developed along BTIP principles.

3. Continuing opportunities are needed for district coordinators to share "best practices" and discuss solutions to a variety of issues and problems. Two issues requiring immediate attention are accounting for BTIP funds at the district level and the implications of the supply teacher shortage on the Program.

4. District coordinators need to continue to address principals' needs to be better informed about the BTIP and to have opportunities to develop a consensus on such issues as release time and the evaluation of beginning teachers.

5. In districts with large numbers of participants, the Steering Committee should recommend to Directors of Education that they explore the option of seconding outstanding mentors to assist district coordinators with the Program.

6. Despite noted improvements, the Steering Committee and district coordinators should continue their efforts to make the use of BTIP funds at the district level as transparent and user-friendly as possible. An underlying aim should be to insure that partners have equal access to funds for teaching release time.

7. District coordinators should consider holding initial training sessions for new and returning mentors either in the Spring or before school starts in September.

8. District coordinators should encourage mentors to make initial contacts with beginning teachers prior to the start of the school year and before the Fall Orientation Workshop.

9. The Steering Committee should encourage district coordinators to try new induction models designed for specialist and/or itinerant teachers.

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